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Finance Committee Minutes 02-09-04

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MEETING
 7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM, COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING
 2/9/04

ATTENDEES:

McGaffigan*	Feinleib	O'Riordan*	O'Neill	Mahoney*
DeCoursey	Connors*	Simmons*	Morrisette*	
Tosti*	Foskett	Deyst*	Ronan	
Piandes*	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*		Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Chick Abbott, Annie LaCourt, Peter Allison, Gordon Jamieson, Susan Wylly-Jones, DEP Rep Carolyn Dunn, Leslie Mayer, Paul Bayer,

MINUTES of 2/4/04 accepted as corrected. Unanimous.

PAYING FOR TRASH COLLECTION & DISPOSAL: There are 3 articles in the Regular Town Meeting Warrant on this subject. All were submitted at the initiative of LaCourt. She together with Jamieson, Allison, & Abbott supported by Dunn described the articles & answered questions. The articles cover alternative ways charges for this service could be assessed. The BOS is establishing a trash advisory committee.

TRASH COLLECTION: This approach would privatize trash collection and disposal. Each living unit would make its own arrangement with a trash collection service. Members questioned how contractors would be regulated. Allison suggested that the Health Department could provide an approved list. Members noted that this approach might increase the truck traffic on local streets. The cost of this service to residents is expected to be more than presently paid as a portion of the real estate tax, but several millions in the General Fund would be freed for other purposes. Members suggested that the fee estimate be documented.

TRASH COLLECTION FEE: This approach would assess each living unit \$50/quarter to pay part of the cost of the existing service. The fee would be collected by the Treasurer as the water & sewer charges are collected. Subscription would not be mandatory. Jamieson estimates that this would raise \$3.75m. The service would be unchanged from present. Members observed that the fee would not be tax deductible and that abuse by non-subscribers would be difficult to police. Tosti requested the group to provide the number of towns that use this approach.

TRASH COLLECTION PLAN: This approach is the same as proposed last year by the Recycling Committee. The Town would continue its present service. Only trash in special bags intended to hold up to 25 to 30 lb would be collected. Each living unit would receive 26 free bags. Additional bags could be purchased at local stores. This approach, known as Pay As You Throw (PAYT) charges units according to how much they throw away. In other towns, including Lexington (during the 9 months when PAYT was in place), the amount of recycling increases substantially, and the amount of trash reduces by a greater amount. The overall collection tonnage reduces by 20% to 25%. This is explained in part by ending abuse by people from neighboring towns and by ending abuse by residents putting out non-household waste. Allison estimates a \$750k to \$1m saving. Based on the number of living units & number of tons of trash collected now, the average household would require between 1 and 2 bags each collection day. Members disputed this point. Currently 107 communities use PAYT of which 12 to 15 are in this region. Members suggested video documentation of abuse.

TEMPORARY SIGNS: Mayer, representing the Parks & Recreation Commission, and using a handout suggested the Commission and the School Dept be allowed to issue sign permits to sports or charity organizations. The purpose of the permits would be to allow an organization to raise funds while avoiding undesirable signage. A permit would allow signs to be displayed for an event or a season on playing fields. Parks & Rec and Schools would use the same regulations. The size of the fee is undetermined. Members suggested that an organization put up its signs only when using the field and that the size & type of sign be standardized. Members suggested that the commission should issue the permit directly to the advertiser perhaps in response to an RFP. Members suggested that the Town receive a portion of the fee since public space would be used.

COMMITTEE: Howard appointed to BOS Trash Committee. Mtg on 2/11/04 to hear Special Twn Mtg articles. No mtg on 2/16, Presidents Day. Chair would like to vote budgets starting 2/18 & finish this month so as to give the appointing authorities time to adjust if necessary.

For more info go to <http://www.arlingtonfincom.com/>

RESERVE FUND BALANCE \$398,000

cc Selectmen
FinCom Members
Acting Town Manager

Peter B Howard
Library file
Town Web Site

Secretary 2/10/04